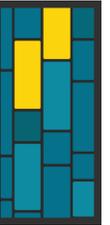


# THE VOICE

Making disciples of Jesus Christ  
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## THREE PHASES OF RE-OPENING THE CHURCH BUILDING

We have been looking at ways for when and how we might begin the process of reopening our facilities in a safe manner. On June 9, the First Lutheran Church Council decided on a phased-reopen plan beginning June 10. Here is what our reopening plan looks like:

### Phase 1:

Reopen the church facilities for business purposes, Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 am -4:00 pm. This is how we will care for visitors while they are inside the facilities:



Step 1 (at the front doors): There is a sign requiring masks while in the facilities. Visitors will be encouraged to bring their own and if they forget, we have some disposable masks where they can make a free well donation.

Step 2 (in the new gathering space): There is a desk with hand sanitizer on it and visitors are asked to complete a quick health inventory form based on common COVID-19 symptoms to help with illness monitoring. They are instructed to bring the completed form to the church office.

Step 3 (at the church office counter): There is a visitor log to write down: name, date, time entered, time exited and where in the building they plan to visit. This documentation will help us with regularly disinfecting high touch areas in visited areas and serve as a record in case we have to do contact tracing. A new cleaning/disinfecting schedule is being created with our building superintendent.

### Phase 2:

Reintroduce small gatherings for ministry. At a date still to-be-determined, small group ministries may resume in-person gatherings, inside or outside (portico, parking lot) the church facilities. Those gathered would need to wear masks and be 6-feet apart. Each group would be responsible for contacting all group members to ensure no one is excluded.

### Phase 3:

Reintroduce in-person worship (when it is safe). Pastor Justin and the Worship & Music Committee are working together on what worship might be like when we are able to gather together again safely. Recommendations will be made to the Church Council for their decisions. Stay tuned for more information.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
[www.flclincn.org](http://www.flclincn.org)

## ADULT ONLINE LEARNING

### Adult Forum

**Info:** [connie.kisling@gmail.com](mailto:connie.kisling@gmail.com)

#### Re-Plays of Forum Sessions:

[www.flclincoln.org/learn/#adult-forum](http://www.flclincoln.org/learn/#adult-forum)

July 5 – NO Adult Forum

July 12 – *Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach* – Glen Schawang, Outreach Specialist and First Lutheran member. Learn how Matt Talbot relieves hunger, defeats homelessness, addresses addiction and provides outreach for Lincoln residents.

July 19 – *Black Lives Matter and Black Leaders Matter* – Pastor Janet Goodman-Banks. This topic calls for potential reforms to combat decades of racism - the lack of diversity and resources and systematic institutional problems facing our world.

July 26 – *Dimensions (Part 1 of 2) – Research and Training of Nature Explore* – Nancy Rosenow, Foundation Executive Director. Dimensions Educational Programs provide a hands-on, experimental approach to learning based on the needs and curiosity of young children. Learn more about the research and training behind the program.

### Bible Studies

**Tuesdays 5:45 pm and Wednesdays 10:45 am**

**Info:** [pastorjustin@flclincoln.org](mailto:pastorjustin@flclincoln.org)

Tuesday's group is studying Genesis and Wednesday's group is journeying through Matthew.

**Saturday with the Guys** - 2nd Saturday; 8:00 am  
(Reading *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright)

**Info:** [jim.kisling@gmail.com](mailto:jim.kisling@gmail.com)

**Harbor Coffee Talk** - Mondays; 1:30-2:30 pm

**Info:** [sharon@flclincoln.org](mailto:sharon@flclincoln.org)

**Faith to Go!** - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays; 6:30 am

**Info:** [tlbeermann@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbeermann@hotmail.com)

**A Few Good Men Bible Study** - Tuesdays; 7:00 am

**Info:** [lrockwell@windstream.net](mailto:lrockwell@windstream.net)

**Gather and Gab** - Thursdays; 8:00 pm

**Info:** [sharon@flclincoln.org](mailto:sharon@flclincoln.org)

## DISCIPLES LEARN...

### DIMENSIONS PRESCHOOL STARTING IN AUGUST

**Info:** Donice Kaspar at

[dtkaspar@windstream.net](mailto:dtkaspar@windstream.net)



The Dimensions Education Program will be opening at First Lutheran Church in August. We are excited to partner with this excellent learning program that focuses on the needs and curiosity of young children, infants through preschool. There will be opportunities coming your way in the near future to build, donate and volunteer, especially with the Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom. You can make a difference!

### FUTURE DISCUSSIONS COMING

**Info:** [pastorjustin@flclincoln.org](mailto:pastorjustin@flclincoln.org)

First Lutheran Church welcomes all because God welcomes all. We are a faith community that can have conversations even when the topics are tough. We engage in dialogue and listening because we care for one another and our surrounding community. Therefore, given the current realities and historical legacies of racism in the United States, it is time for conversation and listening, sharing and prayer. Look for more information about upcoming conversations.

### GATHER AND GAB

**Thursdays; 8:00 pm**

**Info:** Sharon Hardel at [sharon@flclincoln.org](mailto:sharon@flclincoln.org)

"Gather and Gab" is new weekly online discussion group. The group uses *Wired Word* to guide their discussion. *Wired Word* focuses on a news story from the previous week and allows participants to have a conversation about their role in society as Christians, to think outside the box, wrestle with difficult issues and consider ways they might respond in the world around them. This group is open to both men and women of high school age or older and you can join in as your schedule allows.

## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MAAS

Beloved in Christ:

Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation! Now is the time for the people of God truly to engage the ministry of reconciliation, to be ambassadors for Christ, who willingly gave his life that all humanity may be reconciled to God, and all humans might be reconciled to one another.

This is an extraordinary moment. The universal fatigue of living with pandemic has peeled back the thin veneer long kept in place over the internal divisions that let the sin of racism persist around, among, and in too many of us. There's no energy left to pretend that our fellow citizens of color, fellow members of the Body of Christ, live on a playing field as level as the one on which the white majority lives. As a nation, we have seen, so starkly in the last gasps of George Floyd and so frequently in the deaths of so many others, how the lives of people of color are devalued; how they are treated as less-than.

More and more people are willing to acknowledge, as they have not before, that racism exists and is a problem in our nation. That willingness is a start, but it is only a beginning. Now is the time for people of faith not only to acknowledge it but to do something about it.

As ambassadors for Christ, charged with the ministry of reconciliation, we in the church are called to lead in examining our own role in sustaining a status quo that allows racism to continue. Now is the time for this hard work, and for the first strong steps toward a future in which all are wholly equal and truly free of racism's ugly stain.

I am asking, inviting, challenging you—each member and every congregation of the Nebraska Synod—to take advantage of this moment, this holy now, to do one thing, to take one step toward the reconciliation for which Jesus died, and for which humanity continues to wait. I call you to this work not from a position of righteousness or innocence, but as one who has to confess how often I've been wrong not only about the extent to which racism infects our culture, but about my own contribution to it and my own responsibility to do something about it. I can ignore that responsibility no longer. We, the church, can ignore that responsibility no longer.

As pastor to this synod, I am not asking you to agree with me. I am asking only that you join me in a commitment to ask questions, to listen to the experience of others, to learn, and to act. Attached is a brief list of resources compiled specifically for this work. Choose one to engage, at whatever level you feel ready. Engage it with others, and pray, discuss and learn together.

Know too that I am calling on our pastors, deacons, PMAs, and all ministry leaders to raise the matter of racism in their preaching and teaching, to provide leadership and insight as we step into this work together. Prepare to be challenged by their words. Support them as they strive to be both faithful and courageous in speaking difficult truths and proclaiming a powerful gospel.

*(cont. on back page)*



# DISCIPLES SERVE...

## FOOD DRIVE FOR LUTHERAN FOOD PANTRY CONTINUES IN JULY

**Info: Judy Batterman at [judybatterman@gmail.com](mailto:judybatterman@gmail.com)**

Food collection for the Lutheran Food Pantry will continue through July, however, it will look a little different. Now that the church building is open, you will be able to drop your food off during the week. The grocery cart will be located in the front entry and the doors will be open between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Tuesday through Friday. A crew will still be present on Saturdays from 2:00-4:00 pm to process and box the food we receive during the week so you can continue to drop food off then. The volunteers will be working inside, but will be happy to meet you at your car to pick up your donation. The priority food needs are noodles, pasta, fruit (peaches, pears, pineapple), vegetables (peas, corn, green beans), jelly, pancake mix and syrup, beans (pinto, chili, kidney, baked), individual servings of oatmeal, mac and cheese, tuna, canned chicken, juice, rice, canned tomatoes and peanut butter. The food drive in May and June was a tremendous success yielding nearly 4½ tons of food (as of June 13).



## FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS FOR SALE

**Info: Faye Doolittle at [fdoolittle@windstream.net](mailto:fdoolittle@windstream.net)**

Have you been wanting to get Fair Trade coffee, chocolate or tea? You are in luck! Even though we won't be selling on Sundays, you can pick up products by calling Cyndi during church office hours (Tuesday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm) to see if your products are available and to arrange for a pick-up time.

## DISCERN HOW YOU CAN SERVE IN AN ELECTED POSITION

**Info: Kim Cordonier at [kimcordonier@gmail.com](mailto:kimcordonier@gmail.com)**

One of the ways you can live out your discipleship is by serving First Lutheran in an elected position. It's a great way for you to share your talents and help our church community prosper! Here is a list of the elected positions and what each entails:

*Congregational Council:* Average time commitment: 1 meeting per month (approximately 1-2 hours), along with other committees, if you choose to volunteer for them. Term: 3 years. Has general oversight of the life and activities of our congregation ensuring everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*Nominating Committee:* Average time commitment: Starting in the fall-January, 1-2 short meetings per month, along with contacting members on your own time. Term: 2 years. Prepare a slate of two candidates for each elected position.

*Delegates to Synod Assembly:* Average time commitment: 2 days at the end of May in Kearney, NE. Term: 1 year. Represent First Lutheran Church and serve as voting member of the Synod Assembly.

*Endowment Board:* Average time commitment: 4-6 meetings per year, approximately 1.5-2 hours per meeting. Term: 3 years. Oversee investment fund manager for the stewardship of our endowment fund.

# DISCIPLES WORSHIP AND PRAY...

## WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

After we have been gathered together as God's people by the Spirit, and after we have received God's word in scripture reading, preaching and song, and after we have been fed with the presence of Jesus Christ at his table of love and welcome, we are then blessed by God and sent out into the world to participate in what God is up to (God's mission). We go out to live as Christ's body in the world. Thanks be to God!

## BREATH PRAYERS - AN ANCIENT FORM OF PRAYER

**Info: Carol Olson at [carolinroma@yahoo.com](mailto:carolinroma@yahoo.com)**

*Psalm 150: 6: "Let every living, breathing creature praise God!"*

Breathing is something that we often take for granted. It is a type of body function that is under conscious and unconscious control. Most of the time, we breathe without thinking about it. When we are afraid or after exercising we may try to slow our breathing in order to calm ourselves. Christians view the breath as the Holy Spirit moving within the body. Breath prayers are a very ancient form of prayer. The Jesus Prayer has been used for 1500 years! This prayer is said mentally to the rhythm of the breath: "Lord Jesus Christ/Son of God/have mercy on me/a sinner" (inhale/exhale/inhale/exhale). It can also be shortened to "Lord Jesus Christ/Have mercy on me". Other examples: "Holy Wisdom/Guide me", "When I am afraid /I will trust in you". You can compose your own breath prayer! Choose a word or phrase that has particular spiritual meaning, or choose a Bible verse, and say this prayer to the rhythm of your breathing, over and over. This can be very helpful when you are feeling tense, grateful or afraid.

Psalm 150 says that "every living, breathing creature" praises God! Plants breathe as they take in the carbon dioxide that we exhale, and then give out oxygen, which we in turn take into our lungs as we inhale. We share our carbon dioxide with the plants in return. We join the plants in a never-ending cycle of prayer. Perhaps this is a way to carry out the directive to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17)!

## A JOURNEY OF DISCERNMENT GATHERING ON AUGUST 2

**Sunday, August 2; Noon-1:00 pm; First Lutheran lawn**

**Info: Denise Mainquist at [deemain12564@yahoo.com](mailto:deemain12564@yahoo.com)**

Our congregation is entering into a time of discernment and a process to call a new Lead Pastor. In normal times, we would have an intergenerational prayer event for all members to come together, pray and discern the future of our church. But, a large in-person gathering is not possible. So we are offering each of you an individual *Passport to Discernment* you can download and print at [www.flclincoln.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Passport-to-Discernment.pdf](http://www.flclincoln.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Passport-to-Discernment.pdf). This booklet includes several spiritual practice activities you can do and are suitable for all ages. On August 2, from Noon-1:00 pm we invite you to bring your passport and your experiences to the church. We will gather outside on the lawn for sharing and ice cream treats! Wishing you a blessed journey of discernment!

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## CHURCH COUNCIL CORNER

**Info: Mike McDannel at [michael.mcdannel@icloud.com](mailto:michael.mcdannel@icloud.com)**

Recently a First Lutheran Church member suggested that monthly Church Council updates would be helpful. So, here is the first installment of the monthly “Church Council Corner.”

We hope to share detailed information with you soon regarding our Transitional Minister. Please remember to complete the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) Survey as it is very important in our search for a new Lead Pastor. If you are interested in being on the Call Committee, contact the church office or visit [www.flclincoln.org/news/are-you-being-called-to-serve-on-the-call-committee](http://www.flclincoln.org/news/are-you-being-called-to-serve-on-the-call-committee).

Madalyn Popken has been appointed to a three-year term on the church's Audit Committee. Thanks to Madalyn for serving!

Dialogue continues with Dimensions Education Program to ensure a smooth start to the preschool year in the fall. Steve Eicher, Donice Kaspar and Barb Monson are serving on the First Lutheran Dimensions Liaison Team. Thanks Steve, Donice and Barb!

The church is in Phase One of its reopening process and is open for business purposes, Tuesday through Friday, 9 am to 4 pm, with the implementation of new safety steps. For a complete discussion of each phase, read the front page article of this edition of *The Voice* or the June 9th Church Council packet at [www.flclincoln.org/church-council](http://www.flclincoln.org/church-council).

## MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Denise Mainquist recently completed a two-year journey with the Nebraska Synod's *Seeking the Spirit Within* in preparation for the ministry of Spiritual Direction. We give thanks to God for her answering the call to this ministry.

Our sympathies to Doug and Karen Lind-Olson in the passing of Doug's mother; Harlan Heier and family in the death of his brother; Cheryl Thorberg and family in the death of her husband, Pastor Henry Thorberg; David Pitts in the passing of his father; and the family of Larry Glaser in his passing.

## HOW CAN WE KEEP FROM PRAISING?

**Info: Masako Bacon at [music@flclincoln.org](mailto:music@flclincoln.org)**

Of course, we can't! With safety in mind, we are calling string players to join an ensemble rehearsal for worship services and sharing music with friends in outside safe environments. Contact Masako for more information or if you are interested.

## 150TH ANNIVERSARY REFUNDS

**Info: Judy Bailey at [jkbailey47@gmail.com](mailto:jkbailey47@gmail.com)**



Our 150th Anniversary Celebration, originally scheduled in April, was put on hold due to COVID-19. At this time, we have not rescheduled the celebration, but hope to sometime next year. If you purchased tickets to the banquet and would like a refund, please email [jkbailey47@gmail.com](mailto:jkbailey47@gmail.com) and a check will be sent to you. Otherwise, we will hold your ticket for the rescheduled banquet and if you aren't able to attend, we will refund it at that time.

# DISCIPLES TELL THEIR STORIES...

## REFLECTIONS FROM COVID-19 CALLERS

Within several weeks after the coronavirus forced us to close our doors, a team of First Lutheran members were recruited to begin calling on every member of our congregation. These phone calls were intended to see how everyone was coping with the isolation and social distancing guidelines. It was a time to see who needed help, who needed to talk to a pastor, who was feeling alone or who just simply needed a listening ear and someone to talk to. It was also a time to pray with each person. Phone calls were made to all



members in March and again in April. We recently asked some of the callers to reflect on their experience and share what it meant to them and to those whom they called. Here are excerpts from some of their stories:

*Because this time caused all of us to take a pause in the routines of our lives, making a phone call seemed like a new way to keep in touch with our church family. We can all quickly send a text or email to a friend or family member, but taking the time to make a phone call and see how someone is doing seems more personal and appreciated by the person you reach out to.*  
~Peggy King

*I think our members felt the love and concern we have for one another. Some just wanted to talk about how it has been a crazy time and how they were coping with it. Some were anxious and worried about their family and whether all their needs were met. Some in nursing homes loved telling how wonderful the staff has been at trying to keep everyone entertained and yet safe. I heard how they changed bingo so that they could still play and how the staff at one center had a "horse race" of the staff trotting down the halls as the residents sat at their doors to watch. That image still makes me laugh almost as hard as the resident was laughing as she shared how fun and funny it was to watch.* ~Eunice Fisher

*The people I reached seemed very appreciative that someone was calling them. When I told friends of mine about it they said they hadn't heard anything from their church other than they wanted their contributions. I was surprised how moved people were by the prayers we offered during our call. One person actually asked for a copy of one of them.* ~Tracy Way

*There were 20 people on my call list and everyone I was able to contact expressed appreciation for the call. Three people expressed special needs of which I was able to pass on to the pastors or other church staff.* ~Norm Kempf

*I decided to volunteer to be a caller because I had the time and it was something I could do to help. Making the calls would allow me the opportunity to meet new people or talk to those I haven't seen for a while.* ~Sharon Seagren

*The experience for me is something I can't put into words. I was surprised that it was more than I ever expected it would be, but in a really positive way. Many just wanted someone to talk to and process what was going on in the world. One of my conversations lasted over an hour.* ~Carol Mason

*The calls were meaningful to those I called. Even if I didn't speak to some of the people on my list and had to leave a voicemail message, they knew the church was still thinking of them.* ~Kari Hoefl

Thank you to all of our volunteer callers for taking the time to connect, listen, pray, converse and care. If you get a call or a message from one of them again in the near future, take the time to visit or return the call. They just might need YOU to talk to or listen!

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## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MAAS

*(cont. from page 3)*

This is work too many of us have avoided for too long, and we are now gifted with a rare moment to engage it. We who are the church owe it to those who most suffer the consequences of racism, we owe it to one another, and we owe it to Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his life has called us to the ministry of reconciliation.

Let us not fail in this calling. Let us not fail to grasp this moment. Now is the time.

With gratitude for you and prayers for this important work we share,

Brian D Maas, Bishop



First Lutheran  
Church-Lincoln



@flclincoln

*Each person is a unique creation of God and, through grace, is a child of God. The people of First Lutheran Church welcome all because God welcomes all, without regard for race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status, physical or mental challenges, imprisonment, addictions, socio-economic circumstances, or anything else that too often divides us. First Lutheran Church is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that can empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. Our unity is in Christ.*

*The Voice* is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church - 1551 S. 70th Street - Lincoln, NE 68506 - 402.488.0919 - [www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)